

# Hillandale



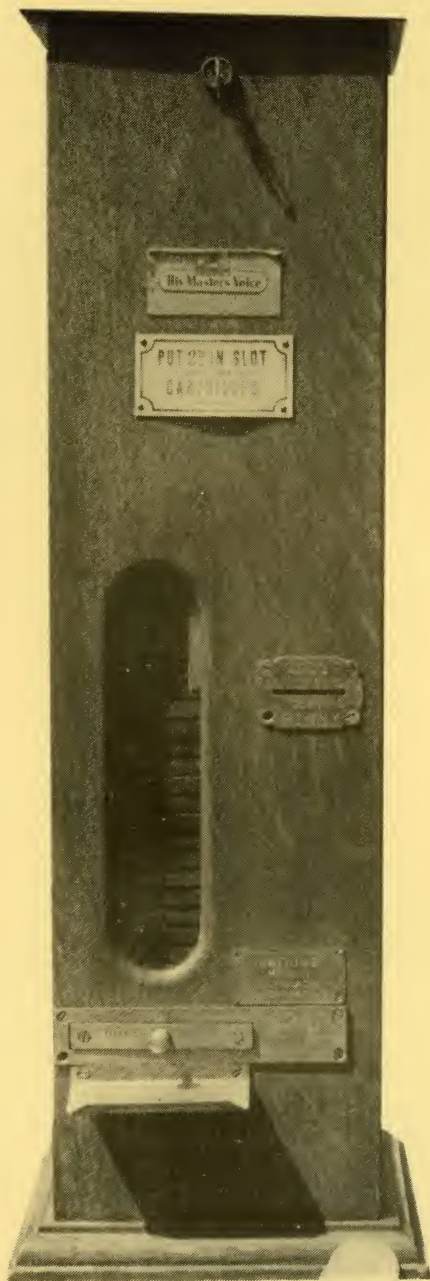
Journal of the  
City of London  
Phonograph and  
Gramophone Society

THE HILLANDALE NEWS

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NEEDLES?

CARTRIDGES? (For shotguns or pickups?)

CIGARETTES?

BARS OF CHOCOLATE?

If you know what this machine originally dispensed at 1d. a go, and where, please let us know.

From the article on needles on Page 321, it is clear that you wouldn't have got many needles for one penny. Were needles ever sold from coin-in-slot machines like this?

# THE HILLDALE NEWS

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(founded 1919)

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## FRONT COVER:

This month's front cover shows a 'sound arm' Monarch of 1903. The amazingly crude design of the first tone arm of all no doubt accounts for its rapid replacement by the taper arm with goose-neck, and very few Sound Arms survive. This example, like many Monarchs of the time, was originally designed for a wood travelling arm, and the off-centre mounting for the extension arm is retained for the back-bracket. Whether the change was made at the factory or by the original owner to update an existing machine is uncertain, but it clearly happened at an early date. Similar adaptations with taper arms are found.

The machine shown is due to come up for auction at Christie's South Kensington on March 6, and another rarity in the sale is a 'Lorelei' Puck phonograph.

The Frontispiece is a 'Whatsit?' picture. Its owner, Rick Akers of Dyersburg, U.S.A., wants to know when and where it was made. From the photograph, it looks to be of American manufacture, though the coin-slot says 'Close drawer before inserting Penny', so it was clearly used in the Sterling area and sold something for 1d. The His Master's Voice label is the flap off a semi-permanent needle packet, c. 1950, and probably unrelated to the machine's original purpose. The 2d. Cartridge label looks even newer. Any Ideas?



# HOMOPHONE IN BRITAIN

by Frank Andrews

## PART 2

In the year 1913 there was something of a price-war going on in the record market. In Germany Deutsche Grammophon had introduced a very cheap record, the "Lila" Zonophon in an attempt to run competitors out of business. Here in Britain the Gramophone Company attempted a similar policy, announcing its "Cinch" record at only 1/1d., only to find that with few exceptions their competitors responded vigorously with their own equally cheap brands.

The Homophon discs were then selling at 2/6d, having been reduced from 3/- on March 1st 1910. 1,268 of them had been sold by August 1913 when Andres Brothers launched a new record, the 10-inch Homochord, to sell at only 1/6d. The first issues bore green-and-gold labels on which a filigree motif appeared above the spindle-hole in place of the musical nudist. Very soon, however, this label was replaced by another, still in green and gold but restoring the unclad harpist to her rightful position, which she still enjoyed on the companion Homophon records.

The new Homophon records were catalogued into a 4,000 series and, like the Homophons, were pressed with the coded recording and pressing-master dates, since all of them were still manufactured in the Berlin factory. The first list and the subsequent additions featured new recordings as well as transfers from the Homophon catalogue. (Whether the 12-inch Homophons, mentioned at the end of the previous article, were or were not first issued as Homochords, they were definitely appearing as such by the time these 10-inch Homochords came on to the market.)

By April 1914 the number of 10-inch Homochords listed was 225. There followed a large influx into the catalogue when 674 former Homophon recordings were re-coupled to make up 337 "new" Homochords. After that, between May and August 1914, only 27 new discs were added.

## BRITAIN AND GERMANY AT WAR

With the coming of the First World War, in August 1914, Andres Brothers suddenly found themselves bereft of all supplies of Homophons and Homochords. Even waxes recorded at their Chiswell Street studios had needed to be sent to the Klosterstrasse factory in Berlin for pressing, a facility which now patently became unavailable. All Homophon G.m.b.H. records were discontinued: it is possible that this had actually happened earlier, since no lists had been published in the trade periodicals for some months before the advent of the war. The 12-inch Homophon/Homochords also disappeared. Somehow Andres Bros. continued to supply 10-inch records, using old stocks, and obtaining new recordings and replacements for old ones by arrangement with Carl Lindstrom (London) Ltd. Lindstroms used some of their matrices to press Homochords at their Mead Works in Gas House Lane, Hertford. They used the 35,000 and 36,000 series begun by Beka Records and subsequently used for Beka, Coliseum, Jumbo, Scala, Arrow and Lyceum records. These wartime Homochords are easily recognised, with pale green and gold labels complete with harpist, but without date-codes in the label surrounds.

Because of their German connection, and the prevailing anti-German feeling in Britain after the outbreak of hostilities, sales of Homochords diminished. Wholesalers such as J.G.Murdoch & Co. and Lugtons stopped handling them after December 1914. Despite these difficulties, Andres Brothers continued in business until March 1917 when, like Carl Lindstrom (London) Ltd., their company was wound up under the "Trading with the Enemy" Acts. The two Andres brothers were confined in the Isle of Man, interned as enemy aliens. They were never again to conduct the Homophon Company's business in Britain.

Naturally, the German Homophon Company continued in business in Germany, but the war had a bad effect on its trade. It lost not only with Britain but also with those other countries which were now at war with Germany. Additionally it lost its business in contract labels with other British territories. The Australian importers turned to J.E.Hough & Co. Ltd. (Edison Bell) for pressings of Rexophone, Rondophone etc.

Of those Homochords made in Germany the highest catalogue number is thought to have been 4618; while of those made at Hertford, the highest known at present is 4662.

### THE POST-WAR PERIOD - HOMOKORDS

Twenty-one months after the signing of the Armistice the following advertisement appeared in the August 1920 issue of "Sound Wave".

"The Homokord Company has pleasure in announcing that the following have been added to their list of records, and the same can be obtained upon application at the above address or of any gramophone dealers in the United Kingdom, at 3/- each. Factors' and Dealers' Terms on application."

There followed fifty-one post-war titles, listed without any catalogue numbers or artists' credits. Additionally there were twenty-two of Billy Williams' former recordings, "&c, &c." The few known examples of these Homokords have black-and-gold labels bearing the harpist trade-mark. They show the two dating codes in the label surround but they do not have the one catalogue number common to both sides.

"The Homokord Company" was the trading name of G.Knight, of 5 Foster Lane, Cheapside. His appointment as agent to sell Homokords in Britain for the Homophon Company of Berlin had been announced in March 1920. The new records listed in his advertisement were a consequence of his having sent British sheet music to Berlin for recording by German ensembles. Until they became available to him in August, Knight had been stocking Homokords in all languages. He had brought them to the notice of the record trade together with an announcement that his company would erect a factory in England within two years. Nothing more is known of that project. When Knight advertised in September, he had dropped the name of The Homokord Company and simply described himself as an importer of foreign records.

It was about this time that the Homophon Company in Berlin were heard making the familiar claim that they had made a new discovery in the technique of recording sound.

### THE NEW HOMOCHORDS

In November 1920 word was going round that a new company, to be called The British Homophone Company, was to go into business with a record which would probably be called the Homophone. David Sternberg, the proprietor of the well-established Sterno Manufacturing Company, was said to be the progenitor of this new enterprise: there is nothing to suggest that Knight had anything to do with it. Some pre-war British and Continental record matrices were to be purchased from the Homophone company in Berlin;



moreover, recordings of up-to-date titles were to be made and pressed in a factory near London where modern machinery had already been installed. This proved to be the factory of the Universal Music Co. Ltd. at Hayes, Middlesex, where production had just started of Aeolian Vocalion records. Some of the latter's matrices were to be used to press records for British Homophone.

Nine months later, on August 3rd 1921, the British Homophone Company Ltd. received its Certificate of Incorporation. It was a private company capitalised at £25,000; its purpose, among others, was to carry into effect an agreement already concluded with the Homophon Company of Berlin (now registered at 108 Alexandrinestrasse). William David Sternberg was appointed Managing Director for life: the only other director was William E. Kearnes of London N.16. Sternberg was an American living in the Brondesbury area of London. Besides being holder of the trade-mark "The Sterno", he was the originator of a war-time portable gramophone known as the Compactophone. (Production of this had passed to Columbia, who sold it as the Regal Compactophone). Sternberg's "life" managing directorship was amended in February 1923 to a term of ten years. A former associate of the earlier Homophon business, E.F.G. "Alphabet" Hale, re-appeared; he was appointed as manager of the company's Midlands Depot, at the Bull Ring in Birmingham.

The name chosen for the company's record was not, after all, Homophone, but Homochord. It was priced at 3/-, and the black, gold and red label carried the familiar harpist trade-mark, which had been renewed in London by the Homophon Company G.m.b.H. in June 1921. The Homokord trade-mark was also re-registered in that month.

The first list of the new 10-inch records was already in the hands of the trade before the company was incorporated. Discs could be ordered from the Sterno Manufacturing Company at 19 City Road, which was also registered address of the new company. Catalogue numbers 101 to 108, some of them pressed from pre-war Homophon/Homochord matrices, were offered for sale in October 1921. They were given 'H' prefixes, indicating manufacture by the Universal Music Company. Another 100 titles were already in preparation.

The November supplement included items by the "Homochord Dance Orchestra", a cover name for various American dance bands taken from the American Vocalion label and also issued here as Aeolian Vocalion. With the December supplement the price was reduced to 2/6d. In March 1922 the records were exhibited at the British Industries Fair at the White City, on the Sterno Company's stand.

#### 12-INCH HOMOCHORDS

12-inch Homochords were introduced at the start of the second year's trading, in October 1922. Six were offered (at 4/- each), with catalogue numbers 2001 to 1006. The prefix HB indicated manufacture by the Universal Music Company and the labels were similar to those on the 10-inch records. None of the post-war Homochords had the date codings to show recording and pressing matrices, since none had come from the Berlin factory. By the end of this second year, in September 1923, there were 367 ten-inch, and 56 twelve-inch records in the catalogue, and the company introduced a new series.

#### 12-INCH CELEBRITY HOMOCHORDS

These had plum-and-gold labels in a P.50001 catalogue series, and they sold for 5/6d. each. Only eight records were issued over a period of two years and seven months. The artists were the Rose String Quartet; Professor Pollack, violinist; Emmy Bettendorf, soprano; Karin Brazell, mezzo-soprano; and Bjorn Talen, tenor.

# HOMOCHORD RECORDS

All the Latest Hits are First on Homochord.

DECAMERON NIGHTS  
IF WINTER COMES  
THE LAST WALTZ  
DANCING TIME  
PEGGY O'NEIL  
RIO NIGHTS  
THE SHEIK  
STUMBLING  
CARAVAN  
RAINBOW  
SALLY  
Etc., Etc.



INSIST ON HAVING  
**HOMOCHORD RECORDS**  
AND THEN YOU WILL GET THE FINEST VALUE POSSIBLE.  
THE HIGH QUALITY RECORDS AT A POPULAR PRICE.



HEAR  
THE  
WONDERFUL  
PIANO RECORDS

After long and exhaustive experiments we  
are able to submit Records with the  
**REAL PIANO TONE.**

For Operatic and Dance Music  
HOMOCHORD RECORDS are Incomparable.

**To THE BRITISH HOMOCHORD CO., LTD.,**

(DEPT. MN.), 19, CITY ROAD, LONDON, E.C.1.

Please forward me COMPLETE CATALOGUE of HOMOCHORD RECORDS.

Name.....

Address.....

Write for Lists:—Using the slip as above (Cut round the Dotted Line).

**THE BRITISH HOMOPHONE CO., LTD.,**  
19, CITY ROAD, LONDON, E.C.1.

Telegrams: Homochord. Finsquare, London.

Telephone: 2294 Clerkenwell.



At some point during 1923 a series of sacred recordings on 10-inch Homochords was launched, with an SO prefix. Numbers SO.6 to SO.20 were issued in December. I have been unable to trace any records with lower numbers.

In February 1924 the Sterno Manufacturing Company began an advertising campaign for Homochords in the United States. The advertisements appeared in America's "Talking Machine World" every month until December. They re-appeared in April, and then at two-monthly intervals until December 1925. British Homochords were thus entering the U.S. market in direct competition with the German Homokords, which had been marketed there since April 1921 by A.G.Kunde of Milwaukee, who claimed to stock every title.

Kunde was succeeded by the Hageman-Stewart Corporation of New York. They became sole importers of the German records in January 1922, and Kunde continued as a stockist. By November the new importers were in the hands of a receiver. The entire Homokord stock was purchased by the Favorite Manufacturing Company of New York, who became the record's American distributor, under the managership (according to the Talking Machine World) of Karl Kromengerger. This could have been a misprint for Kromenberger, but either way his company was still handling Homokords when the British Homochord advertisements appeared in 1924.

#### NEW MANUFACTURERS

Until now all the new Homochord 10-inch catalogue numbers had been prefixed with an 'H', but Supplement 30 of June 1924 showed some with a 'C' prefix. These records came from the London Pathé factory at Barry Road, Stonebridge, where both the vertical-cut Pathé and lateral-cut Actuelle records were made. Some Actuelle matrices were used to press Homochords. Many of these were American recordings, particularly well-known American dance bands, some twenty of them, who all appeared on Homochords under the cover name of "Eldon's Dance Orchestra". Of course, another twenty or so American dance bands already masqueraded under the names of "The Homochord Dance Orchestra", or "Jazz Orchestra". In September the Pathé factory began to produce 12-inch Homochords, which took the prefix 'HC' to distinguish them from the previous 'HB'.

In February 1925 ownership of the Universal Music Company's factory at Hayes passed to the new Vocalion Gramophone Co. Ltd., who began to produce their own Vocalion and Aco records there. They continued with the production of Homochords with 'H' and 'HB' catalogue numbers.

About November 1925 a fourth manufacturer, also at Hayes, began to work for British Homophone. This was none other than the Gramophone Company, makers of His Master's Voice and Zonophone records. For their own records the Gramophone Company were then using one matrix series for studio use and another for outside recordings. In both cases the numbers ran in sequence irrespective of record size or of the label under which the records would be issued. Those details were denoted by the allocation of prefixes, so that for studio recordings HMVs were prefixed according to size: Dd (7"); Bb (10") and Zz (12"). Outside recordings for these two labels were prefixed Br and Cr for HMV and Yr and Zr for Zonophone.

Some of the first Homophones to be pressed here came from Zonophone matrices, but with the coming of recordings specially undertaken for Homochords, the Gramophone Company allocated new prefixes which were applied to their same continuing matrix series: Hh (10") and Jj (12") for studio recordings, and Hr and Jr for outside work.



The 10-inch Homochord catalogue numbers, until now prefixed with H and C, were joined by those prefixed D to denote Gramophone Co. manufacture. Similarly the HB and HC records were joined by HD. It is important to stress, since another writer has stated otherwise, that the catalogue numbers for Homochords ran in continual numerical sequence regardless of the place of manufacture, with one sequence for the 10-inch and another for the 12-inch. Only the prefixes changed.

The last of the H and HB records, made by the Vocalion Gramophone Company, appeared in the January 1926 list, and the last to come from Pathé's factory (prefixed C and HC) were in the April 1926 supplement.

During the first five months of 1926, six Homochords were issued with DO prefixes and one with a DK prefix. It may be that these unusual prefixes signified that other company matrices were pressed for British Homophone by the Gramophone Company. For the two years or so following the May 1926 Supplement, only Gramophone Company matrices, or perhaps that company's Victor matrices, were used for Homochords.

One discographer has stated that some Homochords were made at Tunbridge Wells. Even if the writer concerned was thinking of the Crystalate factory at Tonbridge, he would have been incorrect: Homochords were not made at either of these places.

#### BRITISH HOMOPHONE'S CHEAP RECORDS

By January 1926 the Gramophone Company had been recording electrically for six months. On January 14th they made two test recordings for British Homophone on 6-inch matrices. The tests must have met with approval, for February 22nd saw the beginning of an extensive programme of recording and pressing 6-inch discs. It lasted until 9th December, when 126 masters had been recorded including the two tests. The recordings were put out under five different labels: for the Company itself, HOMO BABY; for Sterno Manufacturing Co. as factors, STERNO BABY; for unknown proprietors, THE JOLLY BOYS and DIXY; and there was one solitary disc styled THE CONQUEST, apparently a trial for Woolworth's. All of them had matrix numbers from the Gramophone Company's studio series, prefixed with Ee. Uniquely, the sides of these small discs were lettered with C and D suffixes instead of the more usual A and B. The first advertisement for Hono Baby appeared, I believe, in September 1926 with the price set at 9d. A complete listing of these records appeared in the June 1984 edition (No. 68) of the Talking Machine Review.

#### THE STERNO RECORD

Another new record was pressed from Gramophone (and perhaps Victor) matrices for the British Homophone interests. It was not advertised in Britain, and probably not sold here. It was THE STERNO 10", introduced about June 1926. It had a blue, grey, white and black label, and began a catalogue series at S.101. It employed pressings already obtainable on Homochords then in production. [For example, S.101 was Homochord D.974.] My guess is that these were made for Export by Sterno to those countries where the Homochord and Homokord labels were registered to the German company. The highest numbered disc known to me in this first series of STERNO records is S.173. All of these Sterno records were electrically recorded. British Homophone had proclaimed its use of electrical recording since May 1926, the month in which the Gramophone Co. admitted the same in its monthly supplement.

After an uneventful 1927, 1928 saw developments which will mostly be told in the next article. In May, a new 10-inch Homochord series started at P.10001, priced at 3/-, with the naked harpist in plum and gold.

(To be continued)

# CRAIG Y NOS

by Lawrie Wilson

Craig y Nos Castle is situated in a great sweep of the Swansea Valley, through which flows the River Tawe, at this stage a wide, swift-flowing trout stream. Mountains rise steeply on either side.

For many years the castle was the home of the great diva Adelina Patti. She was born in 1843 and made her stage debut at the age of seven; in an active career of fifty-six years she reigned for at least three decades as an acknowledged Queen of Song - no mean achievement with competition from such fine singers as Nilsson, Albani, Gerster, di Murska and, later on, Sembrich, Calve and Melba. Her life story is well documented and the reader is referred to the various works which have been published.

Patti bought the castle and estate about 1878 for a reputed price of £8,000 and subsequently spent over £100,000 on additions which included servants' quarters and her own private chapel, together with a small but fully equipped theatre designed by Bucknall and Jennings, completed in 1890 and 'officially' opened by William Terriss in 1891. Craig y Nos was one of the first private houses to have electric lighting; central heating was also installed, a luxury almost unknown at that time.

During the lifetime of her second husband, the tenor Nicolini, hospitality was lavish; the couple would entertain up to 80 guests with extracts from their repertoire and even full operas and ballets were presented. Following Nicolini's death and Patti's subsequent third marriage to the Swedish Baron Rolf Cederstrom, the entertainments gradually ceased and life at the Castle became very routine.

It was at this time that Patti's historic records were made, at Craig y Nos, in December 1905 and the spring of 1906. By then most of the world's leading singers had committed their voices to disc and Patti's was the prize for which all the major companies competed. She finally yielded to the blandishments of the Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. and the Gaisbergs were despatched to Craig y Nos. Although considerable spadework had already been carried out, notably by Landon Ronald, contemporary accounts suggest that it was by no means certain that she would actually record; Fred Gaisberg's considerable charm may well have been a deciding factor.

Patti died in 1919 and Baron Cederstrom returned to Sweden, taking anything of value with him. The property was sold and used first as a sanatorium and then until the present day as a geriatric hospital, which still bears her name. Nothing remains of her personal effects apart from a mauve feather boa and a tiny pair of laced black leather bootees in the possession of the hospital authorities.

Earlier this year I visited Craig y Nos in the company of Dr. Margaret Berwyn Jones of Swansea, who for over a year has been campaigning to preserve the property when the hospital closes next February. Having done so I can appreciate why the diva was so captivated by her surroundings.

'Castle' is a courtesy title; it is in reality an early Victorian gentleman's residence in neo-Gothic style, and an imposing edifice. The situation is surprisingly close to the main road, but just beyond the entrance gates in front of the house there is a courtyard with a fountain in the centre. Since the hospital is still occupied we were only allowed



a discreet visit to the ground floor, where little appears to have been changed; there are large reception rooms with ornate ceilings and magnificent fireplaces. We also saw Patti's billiards room; she was particularly fond of this game.

To the rear of the building is a promenade commanding a panoramic view of the valley; the ground falls away steeply to the river, crossed by a lattice bridge and with a summerhouse nearby. Legend says that it was here Patti first heard her voice, echoed back from the mountainside. Opening on to the promenade is a conservatory or day room where she spent most of the daylight hours.

The theatre is attached to the house, with access therefrom or through a small foyer from the courtyard. Designed for an audience of 100, it is fully equipped with a fly tower containing several changes of scenery, variable stage heights, prompt box and orchestra pit, which we estimated would accommodate twenty players comfortably. An unusual feature is that the floor of the auditorium can be raised, lowered or tilted by two men cranking beneath; by covering the orchestra pit a completely level surface can be obtained throughout the theatre.

It has been maintained in good decorative order, with a colour scheme of pastel blue-green, cream and gilt. The walls have panels with floral motifs and dedicated to composers; Verdi, Rossini and Mozart occupy a special place above the proscenium arch, just below Patti's own monogram. A drop curtain depicts the singer as Semiramis in a gilded chariot drawn by two horses. At the rear of the auditorium is a full length portrait of Patti by Steinhart; this winds up to reveal a projection room for the showing of films and a peep-hole which enabled her to view the auditorium without herself being seen.

The theatre is used for occasional concerts and by the Neath Operatic Society for their annual presentations. This year's production of 'La Boheme' was being rehearsed during our visit.

The whole place is evocative of Patti and the writer supports the opinion that it is well worthy of preservation. Due to the pressure of public interest aroused by Dr. Jones' campaign, an auction scheduled for October was cancelled and the property is now to be offered for tender; a businessman's proposal to use the Castle as a cultural centre failed when his substantial offer was rejected. Although Craig y Nos is a Grade II\* listed building, preservation orders have not always prevented the destruction of irreplaceable theatre machinery or alterations being made to historic interiors, and there are fears that the same may happen here should the premises fall into the hands of property speculators.

Great interest has been expressed by various societies and organisations, none of which would be able to furnish any financial backing; in consequence the present indications are that, without the intervention of a J.P. Getty, yet another National treasure will be lost for ever. Anyone having an interest either in Patti or in theatrical history will be well advised to visit the castle before it is too late.

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## Needles that are worthy of the records.

Nothing wears out a gramophone record more quickly than the use of inferior needles. It is absolutely necessary that the reproducing points should be perfectly accurate and thoroughly reliable, so as to avoid the risk of injury to the tiny grooves of "His Master's Voice" Records.

The following types of needles have been specially manufactured by The Gramophone Company, Ltd., to give every variety of tone that may be desired, and are designed to prolong the life of the records to the utmost extent.

"His Master's Voice" Steel Needles are made of High Carbon British Steel, scientifically tempered and ground. "Loud Tone," Red Metal Box. "Half Tone," Yellow Metal Box. "Soft Tone," Green Metal Box. Price 1/- per box of 200.

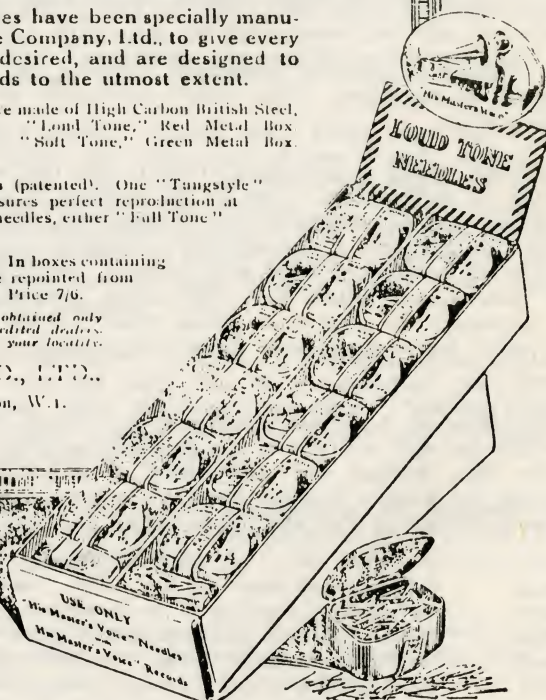
"Tungstyle" Semi-Permanent Needles (patented). One "Tungstyle" Needle plays many records and ensures perfect reproduction at all times. Price 1/- per packet of 4 needles, either "Full Tone" or "Extra Loud Tone."

"His Master's Voice" Fibre Needles. In boxes containing 100, Price 3/-. Each needle may be repointed from 8 to 10 times. Fibre Needle Cutter, Price 7/6.

"His Master's Voice" Products can be obtained only from The Gramophone Company's accredited dealers. Write us for name of nearest dealer in your locality.

THE GRAMOPHONE CO., LTD.,

363-367, Oxford Street, London, W.1.



"His Master's Voice" Gramophone Needles are specially pointed to fit perfectly into the grooves of the record. This ensures an absolutely pure reproduction of the music with a minimum of wear on the surface.



# Nipper's Needles

## A LOOK AT THE BRITISH HMV NEEDLE TINS

*On the inside and outside back cover we show a selection of photographs received from Ruth Lambert. Between them, these cover just about all the main variations found in these tins, although we have not shown each tone of each variation, nor can we show all the minor differences in colour or type size. There are still some gaps to be filled in our knowledge of this topic: for example, exactly when changes were made, when 'copyright' went from yellow to white or vice versa, and has anyone seen a soft tone Tungstyle in the 'reversed colour' style?*

The earliest G & T tin was uncoloured and probably was originally left as bright tinplate, which has now dulled. The trade mark is embossed, and there is no writing on the lid. On the base is '200 English Gramophone Needles'. This tin is shown on the right hand side of the first picture, overlapping the soft tone aluminium tin.

The painted tins seem to have appeared by 1905; the early forms of two tones are shown at top left of the picture. The 'piano' is yellow, the 'pianissimo' green. The red tin had no tone name on it at this time (the words 'Registered Trade Mark' appeared along the bottom of the picture instead). This is because it was at first the only size available, and was simply 'The Gramophone Needle'. Sometimes it was advertised as the 'forte' and also (around 1912) as the 'New'. Neither of these names appeared on the tins. The Pianissimo tins (and the early 'Soft Tone') had a much shallower tin, since the needles were thinner and needed less space. The 'Melba' (not shown here) was a de luxe needle (it was stamped with an 'M', like the Columbia De Luxe's 'C'). It sold at 7/6d. per 1000 in 1905, against 3/- for 1000 of the other tones.

The change of tone names to 'Loud', 'Half', 'Soft' and 'Extra Loud' occurred somewhere between 1914 and 1920. The early 1920s boxes had the word 'copyright' under 'His Master's Voice', as in the third tin down the column. (This is a variation, found in Half Tone only, in which the tone name is outlined in black). The word 'copyright' is sometimes printed in yellow on the blue, green and red tins. Fibre needles at this time came in cardboard cartons, as shown in the 1924 advertisement on Page . At 3/- for 100, each of which could be re-sharpened eight times, the price was effectively the same as the 9d charged for 200 steel needles.

1924 was the year of the aluminium tins, which replaced the painted tinplate boxes for (probably) a year or so only. They seem not to have included Extra Loud, which presumably continued to be sold in painted tins; possibly, since these sold in relatively small numbers anyway, there were ample existing stocks. The aluminium boxes had a match-striking strip on the bottom, perhaps because the manufacturer was using a standard snuff-tin, only the embossed lid being peculiar to the product.

The next painted tin in the left hand column of our photograph has the words 'picture



Registered

Trade Mark

## Only the Best Gramophone Needles should be used

Faulty needles, or those of inferior quality, not only give a poor reproduction, but may ruin the best record in a single playing.

There is only one certain method of obtaining reliable reproducing points—*invis*—on being supplied with "His Master's Voice" Needles, which will give the finest reproduction with the minimum of wear on the record.

The retail prices of "His Master's Voice" Needles are 9d. per packet of 200 Steel Needles, 6d. per packet of 4 "Tungstyle" Needles, 3/- per box of 100 Fibre Needles. The price of the new Circular Needle Container (with compartments for Full Tone, Half Tone, Soft Tone, and used Needles) is 3/-.

STEEL

FIBRE

'TUNGSTYLE'

To obtain perfect reproduction always play "His Master's Voice" Records on "His Master's Voice" instruments.

## "His Master's Voice"

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copyright', and probably dates from the 1930s. Fibres were by then also in tins, of a slightly different shade of dark blue from the Extra Loud. The final, post-war version appears next; this has no 'copyright', but the 'Registered Trade Mark' is now in white instead of black, and the colouring is brighter, with less shading. The variation shown superimposed on this is from South Africa; it differs only in that 'extra loud tone' is all on one line. In the steel shortage of the immediate post-war period, HMV needles were sold in cardboard packs, with paper labels printed in the traditional colours.

Tungstyle came originally in paper packets (as in the 1924 advertisement), but soon went into long, flat tins for which clips were provided in most HMV gramophones. Tungstyle tins are often found scratched by these clips. There are three basic designs; that used for the 'samples' tin (and no other), which is printed in black and gold (this contained six needles, two of each tone; there was no Half Tone Tungstyle); that shown in the bottom three tins; and that in the Extra Loud. These two designs are actually the same, except that the colours of the lettering and background are reversed, and the trade mark is a line drawing with no extra colour, in the 'Extra Loud'. The same reversal was used for Extra Loud, but seemingly not for Soft. Another variation is in the wording of the sub-title: either 'Semi-Permanent Needle' or 'Patent Semi-Permanent Needle'. Later tungstyle needles (probably from the late 1930s onwards) were sold in card folders like those used for other semi-permanent needles at the time.

Combination tins, providing several tones with a used-needle compartment, were introduced in the G. & T. period. On the back cover we show the top, inside and bottom of one of these, while its smaller, three-compartment successor (of about 1910-14) appears in the centre of the inside page. At the bottom right of the same page is the most common of these tins, the four-compartment version of the 1920s. These are occasionally found in their original orange cardboard outer cases.

Finally, there are the circular tins shown on the back cover. These are not true needle tins at all, for they were sold not as mere packaging for needles, to be thrown away when the needles were all used, but as permanent accessories. They are made not of tinplate, but of nickel-plated brass; they cost 3/- new (without needles), and were introduced about 1920. Even here, there are two versions to collect; the earlier one, with the trade-mark embossed, and the later design in which it is merely stamped in outline.

=====

While on the subject of tinplate, Bill Clark has written to ask about the twist sometimes found near the neck of Morning Glory horns. He is referring in particular to one of the small ones fitted to the Victor/Baby Monarch/Victor Monarch (call it what you will), and points to the example shown on Page 50 of the Daniel Marty book, where the twist is quite pronounced. I have noticed this twist present in varying degrees in other Morning Glory horns, often in very good condition, and I have concluded that it is a manufacturing fault which was considered either too unimportant or too difficult to avoid, to justify rejecting the horn in question at the factory. I believe these horns came from a supplier in the U.S.A. who also supplied the Edison polygonal horns, but I do not recall noticing the twist problem on any Edison horn. Perhaps other members may have some views, or even some knowledge, of the subject? - Ed.

# Correspondence

## COMPUTER CATALOGUING

Dear Sir,

Thanks to M.J.Lambert for his interesting article on computer cataloguing. I have spent the past six months familiarising myself with a computer system, with the ultimate aim of cataloguing my extensive, and very unspecialised, collection of records.

I had always longed for a system of cataloguing my records, so as to be able to reference and cross-reference them, in artist, title, catalogue number, matrix number or even royalty stamp! Many of my friends had computers and were eager to have a go at cataloguing my collection; that is, until they saw the extent to which I would have liked them catalogued. Computers are expensive as a full-scale set up, but once you have one, the uses just materialise as time goes on. I discovered this after I decided to take the plunge and buy a system.

First of all, as was mentioned in the article, a cassette drive will not fulfill the demands of a good sized collection, and definitely requires a disk drive or two. Plenty of 'K' memory is also handy, but bear in mind, the information is stored on the diskette, not in the 'on board' memory. Therefore you only require the memory to run the actual program for cataloguing.

When we talk about cataloguing, we are talking about a type of filing system, and that is what type of program we require. This is usually termed a 'database' program. I am using a program called 'DBASE III'. There are many of this type of program on the market and I am sure these programs are cheaper in Britain and the U.S.A. than they are in New Zealand. These programs do not always (especially in the case of the program I have) assume computer expertise in the user, and have extensive documentation, in program help and assist, and therefore become a lesson within themselves.

The program allows you to design your own filing system, you allocate a 'field' with a certain amount of characters and give it a name, you can have many fields and these fields are placed in a 'record'. Therefore each 'record' may contain the fields 'Artist', 'Title', 'Catalogue', 'Matrix' etc. Each has a pre-determined maximum of characters. And so you have your personally designed filing system consisting of many 'records' containing details in 'fields' of your records. Confused? You should be!

The beauty of this program is that you do not need to be a computer expert, but you will soon appear to be! And you need not be confined to just cataloguing your records, we all have branches to our main collecting areas, for instance I have many needle tins, old wireless valves, wax and Amberol cylinders, gramophones and phonographs, why not have a file for these as well, but separately?

Once, after about twenty years of typing, you have entered your items into your file, you can manipulate the information in many ways. Design a form to print out your records for swap meets. Search for a particularly record, or artist, matrix number, or even royalty details. Sort records into alphabetical or numerical order, ask the program to count records by a certain artist, or to tell you which ones are in bad condition when you're running out of storage space.

Chris Ellis, Upper Hutt, N.Z.



And, from Mr. Lambert himself, a reply to Mr. McCreadie's letter in the December issue:

It is unfortunate that Mr. R.A.McCreadie should resort to personal insult in his letter regarding my short article on Computer Cataloguing. The object of the article was to warn people that they might encounter one or two problems if they expected a cheap home computer to handle a reasonable record collection. It was aimed at a reader-ship who, I presumed, might have only a passing interest in the subject; it was not intended to be a PhD thesis on the subject.

The costs in the article were out of date. Substantial price cuts have occurred over the past year or so: shortly after writing the article, I bought an Einstein computer, which cost approximately £850, complete with printer. The same set-up would now cost £430 or less.

I know not of the particular database product referred to by Mr. McCreadie, but would warn readers that a number of the cheaper products are truly capable of manipulating data as he suggests - but can only do so on the limited amount of data that can be stored in the main memory of the computer. You can have lots of small files on the diskettes, but then you cannot easily produce consolidated lists of these files.

Working with a single diskette drive is possible, but care has to be taken as the input and output diskettes have to be repeatedly swapped; anyone making many copies would soon acquire a second disk drive.

Smaller home computers also take a long time to do things on occasions; Mr. McCreadie does not say how long he has to wait for his computer to find things. I would be very interested to see Mr. McCreadie's machine produce a list of records in artist name sequence, when the information is held in catalogue number sequence, on several diskettes.

I would not call myself an expert (I have only twenty years Data Processing experience, and one of my current responsibilities is the administration of a personal computer dealership), but to run some of the true database programs (such as dBase III) requires the likes of an IBM PC. The list price of the software alone is £500. I wish Mr. McCreadie well with his Superbase program. Maybe he will be fortunate and avoid some of the problems regularly encountered with small machines.

M.J.Lambert

Dear Mr. Proudfoot,

I believe I can hear a distinct stereo image when listening to acoustically recorded material. This exists even with a soloist and of course is even more marked with a concerted item, at least as I hear it.

Th effect is to build up a soundstage within the mouth of the horn of my HMV 109. With electrically recorded or re-recorded material (e.g.the Caruso re-creations), the

sound is focussed into the centre of the horn.

I would be interested to hear from any reader who has made such an observation. Could I also ask that readers who have not yet noticed the effect listen out for it. There may be those who know of an Edison cylinder of a military band where the musicians appear to march in from the left, then at the end march off to the right. This was demonstrated to my wife and me at the Society's exhibition at the B.I.R.S. in 1977. We were told by the demonstrator that the band could not have been recorded on the march, and the effect was achieved by swinging the recording horn. Any comments, please?

It would be helpful if those who hear a stereo image would indicate in their replies to me where they find each performer to be standing, e.g. "Alda is on the left of Caruso as heard by the listener" or "The chorus is grouped on the left as heard by the listener". If there is a consistency in such reporting, the sceptics will find it less easy to dismiss the observations.

Those who have a microscope could examine the record grooves. To my eye the differentiation that gives rise to the stereo is quite plain to see. It is not there on electrical recordings. The sceptics say that I am looking at imperfections. They are also concerned that I looked down the microscope before I listened, and heard what I was led to expect to hear!

It is alas not possible to obtain a valid stereo image with a modern stereo pick-up. If the channels are not joined the signal-to-noise ratio suffers and on pre-electric recordings a very strange image is produced. Yet many listeners will not use a stereo cartridge for 78s and prefer to use the old-fashioned single-channel magnetic pick-up. Those even more dedicated use a gramophone or, as a compromise, clip a microphone designed to go into the bell of a musical instrument to their gramophone to make a tape. I have tried these methods and can endorse these preferences, especially the last. Indeed using a stereo pair of microphones, I find much to support my original view that there is stereo present. Again I welcome reader comments on these matters.

The objections to listening via electrical systems is, by my finding, the very poor quality of most amplifiers on the market at present. I have just completed a comparative listening test of every well-regarded transistor amplifier on the market, using my Sonaudan valve amplifier (1963) and my Metrosound ST20 (1970) amplifiers as references, and the sound of live music as the criterion. Paying more money in the present market bought more power but worse sound. Even the best of the amplifiers had bad problems which the classic era amplifiers avoided, possibly because the designers did not go for impressive then, without regard to the quality of the sound! Possibly readers could give me their observations on this too. I am due to test modern stereo pick-up and turntable systems soon and will be pleased if readers will give me their views. My present experience of tests made for my own purchases is that "simple is best" and that "big money buys complexity and problems". Compact Disc remains very much unproven, although very convenient to use.

It would assist me if listeners, when hearing sound through a door slightly ajar, would confirm if the sounds come to a point and then open out as the door is opened. My experience is that channelling the sound through a narrow slot, i.e. making it come as if from a single source, in no way destroys the stereo image.

With the answers to hand, I will be able to see if my observations are peculiar to me.

Ivor Abelson, [REDACTED] Chingford, London E4 9SS



Dear Mr. Proudfoot,

I would like to ask a question through the Hillandale News.

I have often wondered why the quality of the sound on Sterling cylinder records is better and more loud than, say, Edison or Columbia records.

Does any Member know anything of the technique used by the Sterling company in recording cylinders? With regard to Edison recordings, I believe they used a different kind of recorder to that sold commercially by the National Phonograph Company. Was the diaphragm larger and, thereby, more powerful? Or is everything to do with commercial acoustic record processes long-forgotten?

Yours sincerely, Rolf Rekdal, [REDACTED] Norway

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Proudfoot,

[REDACTED] West Germany

DISCOGRAPHIES, RECORDS and TAPE LISTINGS: a Handbook for Librarians and Collectors

I hope this book will be published in about twelve months' time, but to ensure it is as complete as possible, I am writing to ask for the help of Society Members.

The purpose is to provide librarians and collectors with an up-to-date bibliography of discographies. This means, quite simply, that I am trying to list all known discographies in a systematic way, give a description of their contents as fully as possible, and provide some kind of analysis.

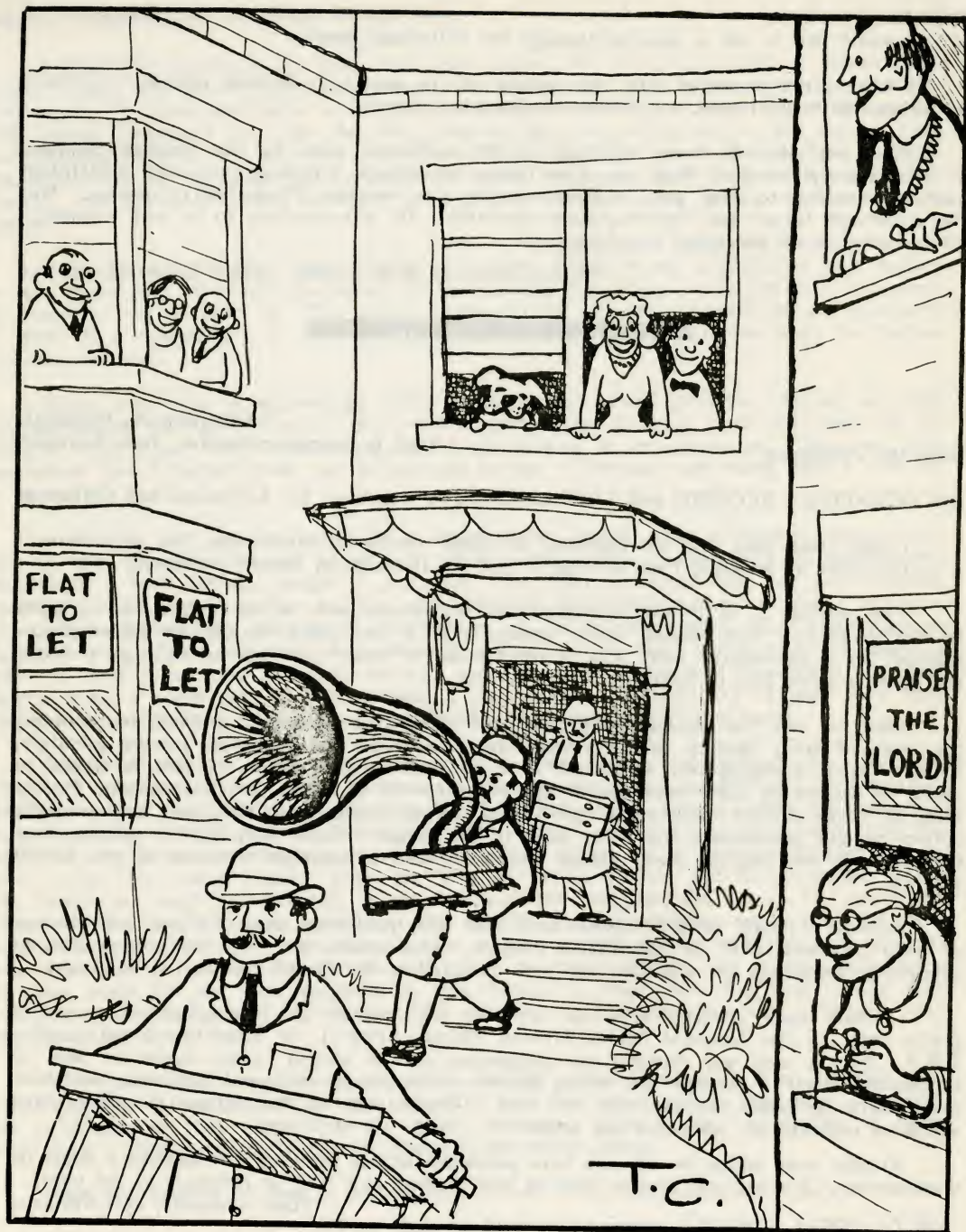
Much of this has already been done, but there is a particular problem in recording the work of many Society members who have researched and published, usually privately, various artist discographies, numerical lists of records and so on. I feel it would be useful to include as many examples of this kind of work as I can, for two reasons. Firstly most of these private publications are almost totally unknown to librarians, and secondly collectors and researchers will - at least in the future - have difficulty in tracing them because I do not suppose many people bother to send a copyright example to the British Library.

Perhaps I should briefly explain here that book publishers must, by law, send a copy of each published title to the British Library. This means not only the preservation of everything published, but also that the book is listed in the British National Bibliography.

I would most strongly urge all members who publish any discographies to send a gratis copy to the National Sound Archive (British Library), 29 Exhibition Road, London S.W.7. May I also put forward the suggestion that a second copy should be sent to the Society itself - perhaps this would become a record of members' publishing activities and, where necessary, be available for loan. (Copies sent to the National Sound Archive would be retained for reference use only).

Finally, may appeal to all who have produced listings privately to send me a copy, or a photocopy. I would also like to hear of any planned new lists or revisions of old ones.

Yours sincerely, D.G.Williams.





# Reviews

## EDISON DISC ARTISTS AND RECORDS 1910 - 1929

*Compiled by Raymond R. Wile, edited by Ronald Dethlefsen and published by A.P.M.Press, Brooklyn, New York; 180 pp., self-cover. Cost \$30.95 airmail, \$21.95 seamail. A hard-cover version is noted but availability and price not known. Obtainable from R.Dethlefsen, [REDACTED] Bakersfield, Calif. 93306, U.S.A.*

It is the sign of a healthy hobby that a regular flow of books and papers is made available to its followers, and this book is a welcome and vital addition. Not only does it endorse, amend and expand earlier findings, but it introduces much that is new; it also leaves the reader with the feeling that there still remains a great deal to be learned about the many forms of material on Diamond Discs.

The excellent photographs are its most striking feature, and most of these are seen for the first time; there are also two colour plates. The 11-inch by 8½-inch area of the page permits the official Company photographs to be shown at almost their original size of 10 in. by 8 in. and with an overall clarity that allows detail to be revealed through a magnifying glass. It is fortunate for today's historians that foresight at the Edison factory for so many years encouraged liberal camera use.

The first part of the book is given over to identification and classification of the Diamond Disc labels by Ray Wile. The early 'labels' were of course electrotype plates pressed into the record material; the paper labels did not arrive for Edison until 1921, and both types went through a number of variations. We learn for instance that discs with Type M-5B labelling are noisy and should be avoided, and there is adequate information on record compositions and processes over the years.

The bulk of the centre of the book is given over to the Artists' Index for record numbers in the American series, and this is laid out in clear detail for both Diamond and Needle Discs and also embraces Tone Test records and artists' pseudonyms. From a list of charges shown, artists like Collins and Harlan and Glen Elliston could expect to make 550 to 750 dollars a week on the Tone Test circuit. Harold Anderson once observed that records for the Tone Tests were given heavier coats of lacquer than the standard Discs.

Selected drawings from the Edison Disc Phonograph patents show how the machines and their components relied on the Cylinder Phonographs to a greater extent than Victor or Columbia could offer, and several experimental prototypes are illustrated.

The 125-ft. recording horn is dealt with more thoroughly than before, and fortunately was well photographed from several angles before it was lost to war scrap about 1942. There was also a 40-ft. horn. In spite of these horns' sizes we learn that results were disappointing, although the listing of blocks of recordings made through them should send the curious reader to try out some, should he have any on his shelves. Another instrument that has given disappointment was the Midmer-Losh Pipe Organ, and what is believed to be a photograph of this is included.

Additional to these topics are the many pages given to factory internal correspondence and letters to the trade, with reproductions of labels and drawings, all of a good quality.

Readers will appreciate the problem of trying to get clear printed results from carbon copies and photocopies, but these present no legibility difficulty.

Surely in no other phonograph or gramophone factory anywhere was so much experimental carried out in those days before electrical recording or certainly before the end of the twenties' decade, and no written records or photographs and original equipment survive as they do at West Orange and Dearborn. It is no wonder that Edison phonograph products are so collectible and attractive to succeeding generations.

As is generally known, some of the Edison Discs have the oddest couplings; some great performances were thrown out by the Inventor himself, or still in wax master form await processing one day, but can we hope that this book will revive deserved interest in standard Diamond Discs? There is apparently no shortage of them in the United States, but good ones are hard to find in the United Kingdom and move mainly on the collector circuit.

The editor Ron Dethlefsen has had great help in this book's preparation, especially from Ray Wile, and from Ben Tongue who lives conveniently at West Orange, and has produced a top-grade definitive work on the Diamond Discs and their artists, and every phonograph and gramophone collector should have one. The Edison Discs bridged the gap between conventional 78s and cylinders, and contain much pioneering material, especially in the jazz and dance music worlds. This is a great book, one that is hard to be away from for long, and all concerned have done a fine work of production.

George Frow

### EDISON SPEAKS

*Voice Recordings of Thomas Alva Edison; published by Mark 56 Records, P.O.Box 1, Anaheim, California 92805, U.S.A. Cost \$10 post paid (U.S.) Researched by Dr. Michael Biel with assistance from several prominent Edison experts.*

During his time working on the phonograph, Thomas Edison must have made thousands of recordings, but these were always experimental and were destroyed as he went along. Fifty-four years after his death only enough remain from his public output to make up nearly an hour on an l.p., and about half of this is introductory and complementary material. Nevertheless it is a remarkable l.p. in that once the familiar is passed the material improves greatly, and gives a feeling of welcoming pleasure to the dedicated Edisonite that so many obscure recordings may be heard after so long.

The record starts with an introduction by Walter Miller, former Director of Edison Recording, to a 1906 anecdote by his old boss; no doubt T.A.E.'s better stories were those he reserved for his cronies' private ears. Miller's statement that "no man has benefitted mankind to such a degree" was undoubtedly true when he spoke in 1939, and Edison would still rank high today.

The 1908 introductory speech by Edison to the New York Electrical Show follows, and this too has been heard occasionally over the years. The next extract is the most familiar,



the rather odd "Let us Not Forget". This speech used to turn up fairly regularly on cylinder and disc, but the sleeve note makes no mention that Blue Amberol 3756 is found either with or without the 'Star Spangled Banner' following Edison's voice. The l.p. reproduces the speech from both takes, and leaves us none the wiser as to who were Edison's demagogues who might "belittle the part played by our gallant allies..." To whom was he referring? Was there an American isolationist movement strong in December 1918?

An extract from "Greetings from the Bunch at Orange" features both T.A.E. and Charles Edison. An unexpected and obscure oddity is Edison's speech recorded on his 82nd birthday to be played at the opening of a New Zealand radio station, more of an economic survey to the then 1½ million population than the marking of a new radio service. There are also several minutes of the inventor tapping out a message in archaic American Morse code, and the sleeve appeals for someone who can decipher this today.

It has long been assumed from a written report that the British Ambassador Sir Esme Howard himself handed over to Edison the original tinfoil phonograph from the London Science Museum, but here we find it was actually the Chargé d'Affaires at the British Embassy who made the presentation at the time of the inventor's receiving the Congressional Medal of Honour in October 1928, and the presentation of both is heard. This recording of the ceremony was made from the broadcast on an Edison EXP (Experimental) Disc of slow speed (30 r.p.m.) and fine grooves.

It is the inclusion of such discs that gives three more extended tracks to this record, all extracts from Edison broadcast shows. Among these are included 'Roxy' Rothafel and Thomas Edison's staunch friends and camping companions Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone. On his 83rd birthday in 1929 T.A.E. is heard speaking from Fort Myers and here he refers to the rubber experiments with golden rod. The last radio extracts are from the Golden Jubilee of Light celebrations at Dearborn in October 1929, the same week as the phonograph department at West Orange was being wound up. Here the inventor sounds weary and weak-voiced in his after-dinner speech; in fact, the sleeve notes tell us that he fainted afterwards.

The remainder of the excerpts on this l.p. are newsreel and telephone extracts, some quite short, and include Edison's final words shortly before his death in 1931, "have faith, go forward".

As an orator Thomas Edison was unwilling, reticent and shy, and preferred to leave it to others; indeed he says here "public speaking is entirely out of my line", and this record shows more than any written account that he was basically a simple unaffected man who did not go out of his way to court adulation and acclaim. As a document of history it should be on the shelf of all who follow the many paths of phonograph invention. It seems unlikely that any further Edison voice extracts exist, but so well do some of these Edison EXP discs come over that a further compilation of 1920s Edison Radio Shows might well be a practicable project.

George Frow.

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#### L O N D O N M E E T I N G    F E B R U A R Y 2 5 T H 1 9 8 6

Ruth Edge and Leonard Petts will present "The Development and Introduction of the 10-inch Record into Britain and Europe in 1900-1". Original 1901 10-inch recordings, including at least one Berliner, will be played. Good copies of the 1901 10-inch catalogue will be presented to members of the audience, with a playing list. *THIS IS A PROGRAMME NOT TO BE MISSED.....*

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# London Meeting

19th November 1985

## POLITICIANS ON RECORD 1888-1931

Fears that Peter Martland might inflict upon us the bombast and invective of forty years' tub-thumping proved mercifully groundless to all who braved the bitter cold to attend this intriguing programme. He transported us back to an age when politicians wooed their supporters with reasoned argument, skilful oratory, wit and clear enunciation. Of course, some of them did it better than others. Gladstone's cylinder record of 1888, gorged with grandiloquent orotundity and affected vowel sounds, talks down to the listener and reveals why he was so heartily detested by so many people including the dear Queen. Woodrow Wilson's 1912 Victor record contains a speech delivered in such a monumentally boring monotone, one feels it can hardly have contributed to his election success the following year. Both of them were, however, eminently preferable to today's political activist, whose only argument consists of shouting his opponent down and shrieking "Out! Out!" (I see in today's "Times" that a powerful political leader in the U.K. has summarised his Party's politics, first by pointing out that his opponent is a "white-livered cur" and then by having him punched in the stomach.)

It was interesting to identify those speakers who could project their personality beyond the mechanical barrier which the new medium of recording interposed between themselves and their listeners. The charisma of the larger-than-life characters came through vividly; those such as Asquith, Winston Churchill, Lloyd George and (from across the Atlantic) William Jennings Bryan and Teddy Roosevelt. It was uncanny to find oneself moved by the words of men long dead; to find one's withers wrung and one's hackles raised, one's righteous indignation harnessed to causes lost or won countless decades ago.

Speaking personally, I found that the further we progressed into the Twentieth Century, the less impressed I was with the quality of the oratory. From the speeches recorded for the 1929 General Election the only one which impressed me was, surprisingly, that of Stanley Baldwin. Throughout my lifetime he has always struck me as being a smug sanctimonious bore. Now I found his arguments springing lucidly and persuasively out of the record. I found myself thinking "I could vote for him!" By contrast, Neville Chamberlain's flashy self-satisfaction was captured faithfully, and cruelly, by the recording process, while the cross and petulant Philip Snowden left me hopelessly stumbling along behind, in his relentless pursuit of an abstruse aspect of income tax. Perhaps he had hit upon the greatest advantage of the gramophone record as a political weapon, its ability to allow the listener to replay the speech over and over again until eventually he succeeds in understanding it.

This programme was unusual and entertaining, but it was besides a testament to the capacity of the talking machine to probe behind the public facade of a speaker, undistracted by gesture or facial expression, and capture his true personality for good or bad.

\*\*\*\*\*

17th December 1985

## GROWING UP WITH THE GRAMOPHONE

Ken Loughland presented a nostalgic selection of records remembered from his childhood and adolescence. Ken had the good fortune to be born (in 1929) into a family where



records were much in favour. His father was a keen collector who enjoyed hunting for records in the shops and stalls along Edgware Road and Praed Street in West London. Understandably, Ken became infected with his father's enthusiasm at a very tender age, and it became obvious as we listened to him that the enthusiasm has not abated with the passage of the years. Ken's programme consisted of items from his father's collection, many of them the actual discs; others accurate replacements carefully acquired over the years to fill gaps left by breakages and losses. Some of the listeners who were born about the same time as Ken found themselves recognising records which had adorned their own childhood. We heard artists such as Frank Titterton and Hubert Eisdell; and G.H.Elliott who sang "Lily of Laguna" including the verse which, innocent enough in those days, would be socially unacceptable today. This was an engaging and entertaining programme, carefully compiled and genially presented.

A.O. Leon-Hall

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## WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER

### A Centenary Tribute

*by John Cavanagh*

The great conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler was born in Berlin on the 25th of January 1886. After he completed his studies with Rheinberger and von Shillings, he held several posts (at Zurich, Strasbourg, Lubeck, Mannheim and Vienna) before succeeding Nikisch as conductor of the Leipzig Gwendhaus Orchestra.

This appointment took place during 1922. Two years later, on January 24th 1924, he made his first appearance in Britain. At a Royal Philharmonic Society concert he conducted a Handel/Strauss/Brahms programme.

Furtwängler also became principal conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic in 1922. Other appointments honoured his powers as a conductor of opera. I am thinking in particular of his period as Chief Conductor of the Bayreuth and Salzburg festivals and his performances of the Ring at Covent Garden in 1937 and 1938.

In 1948 Furtwängler brought "his" orchestra (which was by that time the Vienna Philharmonic) to Britain for a Beethoven cycle at the Proms. At least one of these concerts was televised, and all were met with enthusiastic public and mixed critical acclaim.

His tempo rubato was always a controversial point with the critics and the best of his art almost always came out in live performances. However, we can still judge the greatness of Furtwängler's art from his work from the gramophone. A major contribution to the re-issue catalogues in recent years is the complete recording of Wagner's Tristan und Isolde conducted by Furtwängler. An historic document of this artist's work, recorded not long before his death on November 30th 1954.

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U.S. Dollar subscription rates (including bank charges): \$15.00 Airmail / \$11.00 surface mail.

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For details of the needle tins illustrated on the facing page and overleaf, See 'Nipper's Needles' on pages 220-223.

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Articles for inclusion in the HILLANDALE NEWS should be sent to The Editor, and should carry the author's name. Inclusion, in whole or in part, is at the Editor's discretion.

Illustrated articles are particularly welcome, but please note that colour photographs are seldom suitable for reproduction, and photostats must be of good quality and of suitable subjects (e.g. a photostat of a photograph is NOT suitable).

Letters seeking advice from other members are as welcome as articles providing it, and answers to such letters. The Editor regrets, however, that he is seldom able to engage in personal correspondence, and asks that members bear with him in this.



